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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1997
Geneva, 30 June-25 July 1997
Items 7 (a) and (b) of the provisional agenda**
REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES: ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS

Trade and environmental matters

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Message from the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities to the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

The UNCTAD Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, at the second part of its first session, held in Geneva from 19 to 21 February 1997, welcomed the first five-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, to be carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session and the General Assembly at its special session in 1997. Governments have taken steps to anchor the concept of sustainable development and Agenda 21 follow-up activities firmly in the work programme of UNCTAD.

The Commission considered that the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations has furthered the process of trade liberalization, opening new opportunities for sustainable development and

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growth. However, marginalization remains a risk for developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and could hamper their benefiting from resources that trade may generate for enhancing sustainable development.

The Commission recalled the strong commitment at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to a global partnership for sustainable development, and reiterated the high priority attached by UNCTAD to the acceleration of development that is environmentally sound and sustainable. The Commission stressed the urgent need for renewed efforts at both the national and international levels to make trade and environmental policies mutually supportive and, more generally, to promote sustainable development, including by designing and implementing positive measures and by providing effective economic incentives.

As requested by the Conference, UNCTAD has actively sought to play effectively its special role in promoting the integration of trade, environment and development. UNCTAD has in particular taken appropriate steps to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular by endorsing at the ninth session of UNCTAD the work that the Commission, at its fourth session, proposed for UNCTAD.

UNCTAD looks forward to a substantive outcome of the special session of the General Assembly. As the focal point within the United Nations for dealing with trade and related issues of development and as the task manager on trade, environment and sustainable development, UNCTAD stands ready to meet the challenges of a revitalized agenda on trade and sustainable development.